South Somerset District Council

South Somerset Rural Broadband Gigabit Vouchers

Since the Covid 19 lockdown, our broadband connections have never been more important to us with many people working from home, studying from home, using the internet to keep in touch with families and friends, and keeping us up to date and informed on world events. Therefore, we would like to remind you that the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is still available.

If you want to discuss the vouchers in more detail, we can talk you through the scheme. Please email Econdev@southsomerset.gov.uk for more information.

Want to find out more?

- The Rural Gigabit Vouchers are provided by Government to essentially gap fund rural broadband connections. Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers worth £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small to medium-sized business (SME) to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections. Please note that with this scheme single connections are not eligible so it would need some co-ordination for businesses / residents to combine vouchers. https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/. We can help!
- As of March this year the Universal Service Obligation for Broadband was instated. This means that residents and business have the right to legally request a decent and affordable broadband connection. If you can't get a download speed of 10 Mbit/s and an upload speed of 1Mbit/s, you can request an upgraded connection. The maximum amount that this can cost is £3,400 however you can combine this amount should nearby premises also be eligible. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/broadband-uso-need-to-know

Find out more about the process on the next page

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Who is eligible?

- Homes and businesses with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps
- Group projects are when two or more residents and/or SMEs get together to combine their vouchers
- Must be in a rural area, find out what is defined as a 'Rural area' at https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/who-is-eligible/
- In order to qualify for a business voucher you will be asked to self-certify that you meet the European Commission definition of an SME. Find out if you qualify as an SME at https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/home/who-is-eligible/

Points to be aware of:

- In many instances, residents will be required to upgrade their contract to take advantage of the new fibre connections. It is not an automatic process. There are a number of reasons for this, for example: the resident may need to fulfil their contract obligations with their current provider.
- If a resident lives in a very rural location, i.e. is the only one at the end of the line, and the cost is greater than the voucher amount they will be expected to make up the shortfall. This will be expensive. The maximum voucher value is £1,500.
- The deadline for submission is March 2021.

The process of getting a voucher: